

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Heltne Oil Company

other name/site number: Heltne's Exxon

2. Location

street & number: 140 First Street

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Havre

state: Montana code: MT county: Hill code: 041 zip code: 59501

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Maeville Shuff 6-24-94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register
 see continuation sheet

 determined eligible for the
National Register

 see continuation sheet
determined not eligible for the
National Register

 see continuation sheet
removed from the National Register

 see continuation sheet
other (explain):

for
Signature of the Keeper Entered in the Date of Action
Edson H. Beall National Register 8-16-94

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private	Number of Resources within Property	
	Contributing	Noncontributing
Category of Property: Buildings		
	<u>1</u>	___ building(s)
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0	___	___ sites
	___	___ structures
	___	___ objects
Name of related multiple property listing: Roadside Architecture Along US 2 in Montana	<u>1</u>	___ TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:	Current Functions:
Commerce/Trade: specialty store	Commerce/Trade: specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification:	Materials:
Modern Movement: Moderne	foundation: concrete
	walls: brick
	roof: asphalt
	other: concrete block

Narrative Description

The Heltne Oil Company service station is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of 1st Street and 2nd Avenue in the downtown commercial district of Havre, Montana. The original building was designed by E. O'Hare, a Cut Bank architect. Construction began in March 1939 and the station opened for business four months later on July 1, 1939. In 1958 a large, 30' x 52' concrete masonry unit addition was attached to the east side of the older structure. The former Dee's Body Shop building, immediately west of the 1939 station, was demolished to make room for the new service bays.

The 1939 building is an 'L' shaped, flat roof structure, facing east along 2nd Avenue. The walls are constructed of glazed tan brick with decorative trim in a darker shade of brown.¹ The original two service bays face east while access to the 1958 addition is from the north and south sides of the building.

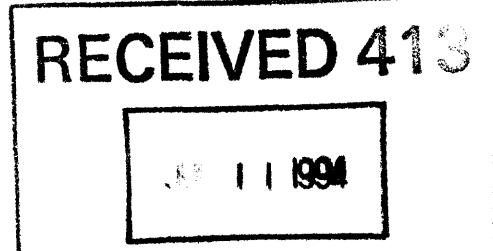
The facade of the station is embellished with numerous ornamental pilasters that extend several feet above the windows. Over the two walk-in doors the flanking pilasters are connected to form 'H'-like features which extend slightly above the roof line. The northeast corner of the office is cut diagonally with three large, two-panel metal-framed windows that wrap around the corner. Small rectangular transom windows above both doors open to provide ventilation while the larger windows are fixed.

Interior space is separated into front office, back office, rest rooms, and service bays. The ladies room is entered from the north side of the station, while the men's room is off the front office. The newer bays are accessed via an east-west passageway from the original service area. All shop doors are overhead metal units. Two twin pump islands are located approximately twenty-five feet from the station, parallel to the adjacent streets.

¹ The original trim consisted of red bands along the top and bottom of the building and windows (see 1939 photograph).

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET



Section number

Heltne Oil Company

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

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The Heltne Oil Company Service Station retains an excellent level of integrity with its original design only altered slight by the 1958 addition on the rear. Still in use today, it clearly evokes its historic associations and is a fine representative of Moderne style.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C	Areas of Significance: Architecture Commerce
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a	Period(s) of Significance: 1939-1944
Significant Person(s): n/a	Significant Dates: 1939
Cultural Affiliation: n/a	Architect/Builder: E. O'Hare

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Heltne Oil Company service station is significant for its association with automobile travel along US 2 from the late 1930s through the early post-war era. The highway served for many years as the nation's main gateway to the northern Rocky Mountains, prior to the development of Montana's interstate highway system in the early 1960's.

Architecturally, the building is an outstanding example of the transitional period of gas station design between the more ornate styling of the early 1930's and the porcelain-enameled oblong box so dominant after the war. The two-toned decorative brickwork together with ornamental pilasters blend nicely with the more modern and functional aspects of the design. Large windows to display company products and accessories together with more spacious enclosed service bays reflect the changes taking place in the service station industry during the late 1930's.

The station was built by the Northwest Refining Company of Cut Bank, Montana in 1939. It was designed by E. O'Hare, a local architect. Danfield Heltne, the operator of a local Mobil gas outlet, acquired the lease to the new station from the onset. The business has remained in the Heltne family ever since although the building itself was not purchased from the corporation until 1974.

The station opened for business on July 1, 1939, selling Grizzly gasoline, a product of Northwest Refining. Prior to the Second World War a number of Montana refineries produced and marketed petroleum products under local tradenames and Grizzly was one of the more prominent brands across the northern part of the state. In the early 1940's Carter Oil purchased the Northwest Refining Company and a few years later began marketing Oval E gas from all company-owned stations, thereby replacing the Grizzly logo at Heltne's station. In 1950 the Oval E brandname was changed to Carter.

Greater centralization in the nation's petroleum industry resulted in additional name changes over the years. Humble and Enco signs hung above the station during the 1960's before Standard Oil of New Jersey consolidated its assets in the early 1970's. Since that time, Heltne Oil Company has sold exclusively Exxon petroleum products. It is the oldest continuously operated station in the Havre area and one of only a handful of local businesses to remain in the same family for over half a century.

The building has been well maintained and is in excellent structural condition. With the exception of a few minor modifications, the station looks much as it did on opening day, over fifty years ago.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bayer, Linda. "Roadside Architecture," Historic Huntsville Quarterly 9:1,2 (1983).
Gorder, Norman. former Heltne Oil Company station manager and part owner, Personal communication (Havre, MT), July 1993.
Heltne, Douglas L. manager and owner of Heltne Oil Company, Personal communication (Havre, MT), July 1993.
Henderson, Wayne. Guide to Gasoline Logos. self-published, Marshall, NC (1993).
Jakle, John. "The American Gas Station, 1920-1970," Journal of American Culture Spring (1976).
Liebs, Chester. Main Street to Miracle Mile. Little, Brown & Company, Boston (1985).
Olson, Charles D. "Sign of the Star: Walter Dorwin Teague and the Texas Company," Society for Commercial Archeology News Journal 11:1 (1990).
Vieyra, Daniel. Fill'er Up. Collier Books, New York (1979).
See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	597500	5378480

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): NW ¼, NW ¼ NE ¼ of Section 8, T32N,R16E

Verbal Boundary Description

Havre Townsite, Block 38, Lot 6.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the lot upon which the nominated building is located.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Joseph M. Ashley, Associate Professor of Geography
organization: Montana State University date: October 1993
street & number: Dept. of Earth Sciences telephone: 406/994-6904
city or town: Bozeman state: MT zip code: 59717

Property Owner

name/title: Douglas L. Heltne
street & number: 140 First St. telephone: 406/994-6904
city or town: Havre state: MT zip code: 59717